

Thu May 12 17:24:44 EDT 2016  
Gaines.Cynthia@epamail.epa.gov  
FW: Congressional Letter on Connecticut Water Systems by Elizabeth Esty (00352924)  
To: CMS.OEX@epamail.epa.gov

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FYI to OCIR. Thanks.

**From:** Wachter, Eric  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 12, 2016 5:18 PM  
**To:** Gaines, Cynthia <Gaines.Cynthia@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Congressional Letter on Connecticut Water Systems by Elizabeth Esty (00352924)

For OCIR

**From:** Malliou, Ekaterini (OS/IOS) [<mailto:Ekaterini.Malliou@hhs.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 12, 2016 3:49 PM  
**To:** EPAExecSec <[EPAExecSec@epa.gov](mailto:EPAExecSec@epa.gov)>; Moritz, Brigitte <[Moritz.Brigette@epa.gov](mailto:Moritz.Brigette@epa.gov)>; Wachter, Eric <[Wachter.Eric@epa.gov](mailto:Wachter.Eric@epa.gov)>; FEMA Exec Sec ([FEMAExecSec@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMAExecSec@fema.dhs.gov)) <[FEMAExecSec@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMAExecSec@fema.dhs.gov)>; CDC Exec Sec - Correspondence Box ([DirectorsIncoming@cdc.gov](mailto:DirectorsIncoming@cdc.gov)) <[DirectorsIncoming@cdc.gov](mailto:DirectorsIncoming@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** ASPR Exec Sec (OS/ASPR) <[ASPRExecSec@hhs.gov](mailto:ASPRExecSec@hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Congressional Letter on Connecticut Water Systems by Elizabeth Esty (00352924)

Good afternoon,

Representative Elizabeth Esty sent a letter to EPA, FEMA, CDC, and HHS on Connecticut’s Water Systems.

The Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Grant Program that Rep. Esty mentions is an EPA grant. The certified operator certification program that she refers to is also an EPA program.

CDC and HHS defer to EPA for a direct response.

Thank you very much,

Kat.

Ekaterini (Kat) Malliou, DrPH, MPH  
  
Senior Policy Coordinator  
  
Immediate Office of the Secretary  
  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
  
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**ELIZABETH H ESTY**  
5TH DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT



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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0705**

**MAY 02 2016**

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April 27, 2016

Secretary Sylvia Matthews Burwell  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
HHS Office of the Secretary  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Administrator William Craig Fugate  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20472

Administrator Gina McCarthy  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of the Administrator 1101A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Director Tom Frieden  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Secretary Burwell, Administrator McCarthy, Administrator Fugate, and Director Frieden:

It has come to my attention that there are currently 14 public water systems (PWS) in the state of Connecticut that are not in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and its Lead and Copper Rule. Three of these water systems serve 516 constituents in Connecticut's Fifth Congressional District.

As you know, lead levels of over 15 parts per billion (ppb) exceed federal thresholds and require immediate attention. According to an Associated Press analysis, tests on water drawn from Newtown, Connecticut found lead levels of 17 ppb. Three separate tests in Brookfield, Connecticut, one of which was conducted in a K-8 school, found the water to have lead levels of 17 ppb, 19 ppb, and 20 ppb. It is my understanding that the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) alerted all residents who are exposed to the water. However, if the residents choose to purchase clean water from another source, they are still expected to pay their water bills.

The health risks of drinking contaminated water are very serious, and families should not have to pay for contaminated water in addition to purchasing clean drinking water from another source. I ask that your agencies assist CT DPH in resolving this issue as quickly as possible.



CT DPH needs funding support for technical staff in its Drinking Water Section. Staffing levels have been reduced from 50 employees to 38. CT DPH licenses more than 2,200 certified public drinking water operators. This certification program, previously funded by the Expense Reimbursement Grant that ended in 2010, currently has only one state-funded staff member.

It is extremely important to the health of Connecticut residents that CT DPH is able to retain a well-trained workforce. With current budget constraints, CT DPH has indicated it will be unable to do so. I would like to echo CT DPH's request (outlined in the attached letter to the Environmental Protection Agency dated March 30, 2016) for your support in the following:

1. Doubling the financial resources under the Federal State and Tribal Assistance Public Water Supervision Grant. This grant is used in Connecticut specifically to fund DPH Drinking Water Section staff that assure compliance and oversee SDWA Rules; and
2. Providing funding support for a robust Certified Operator Program. CT DPH asserts that it needs a minimum of four employees for an adequate program. Professional and adequately trained certified operators are part of the public health system that will continue to provide necessary system operation and first-line compliance with the SDWA.

Lead levels exceeding federal thresholds pose a serious public health threat, particularly for more vulnerable populations. Immediate action must be taken to ensure that Connecticut's residents have access to safe drinking water, that no residents are forced to pay for contaminated water, and that CT DPH has the resources it needs to maintain the integrity of its uncontaminated systems.

I look forward to working with you and thank you for your immediate attention.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress